

## A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO CHICAGO'S PUBLIC ART

By Abraham Richie

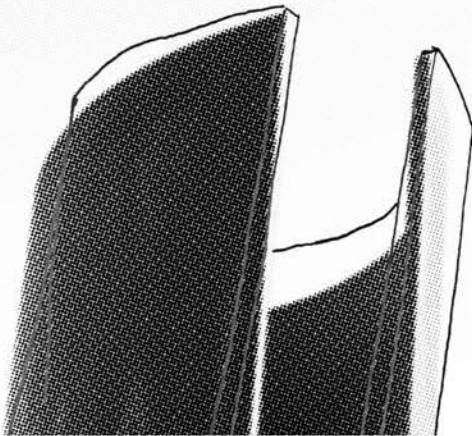
Illustrations By Steven Vainberg

The idea of a city as an open air museum has become immensely trendy in past years (thanks Richard Florida and ArtPrize!) but here in Chicago the collection lives up to the claim, with works by artists from world-class stature to the anonymous scattered throughout the city. As you explore the city during EXPO enjoy this guide some of the city's must-see works as well as works that are, thankfully, only temporary.

### Smith Museum of Stained Glass Windows

*Location: Navy Pier, lower level*

If you flew into O'Hare on an international flight you might have seen some of the stained glass from this collection as you made your way to customs. Incongruously located steps away from the McDonald's, Bubba Gump Shrimp, and a DEA Museum, this walk-through museum contains stunning examples of Tiffany stained glass, and Prairie-style glass, easily outshining the collection of the Art Institute.



### Richard Serra, Reading Cones

*Location: Grant Park, south of East Monroe Avenue*

Named for Reading, Pennsylvania, for where the work itself was made, this characteristic Serra work of two massive, gently curving steel sheets with a narrow path down the middle nonetheless provides a quiet area in the hustle of the city—Chicago's teens have long enjoyed this area as a place to make out or smoke weed. Not to put a hierarchy on pleasures, but you'll probably better enjoy the work for the way it frames the spectacular Buckingham Fountain to the south.



### Stephan Balkenhol, Man With Fish

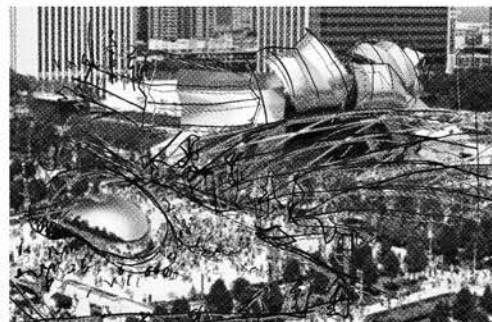
*Location: Nearby the Shedd Aquarium entrance*

Created by the famous German sculptor and depicting a man hugging a fish that sprays water from its mouth, this work is one of the most under sung sculptures in the city providing a surreal experience and connecting, if inadvertently, to Chicago's long history of outsider and folk art.

### Millennium Park

*Location: Michigan Avenue, East Monroe Street to East Randolph Street*

Like almost all American cities, Chicago is riven by economic disparities, unequal civic support, and racial prejudices, but Millennium Park provides a vision of what the city could be. Children play in the water of Jaume Plensa's *Crown Fountain*, teens pose and marvel at Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate*, and adults take in music or performance at Frank Gehry's Pritzker Pavilion, legally classified as a work of art to skirt building height laws. Pay no attention to



the weird attenuated heads also by Plensa that totally miss the success of his *Crown Fountain*; they're only temporary installations.

### Cows on Parade

*Location: Intersection of North Michigan Avenue and East Washington Street*

Hey, don't blame us for this idea of having artists decorate fiberglass animals that became a worldwide phenomena, we stole it from Switzerland.

### Various artists, Horses of Honor

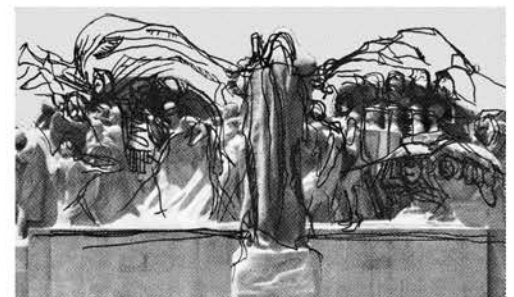
*Location: throughout Chicago*

The cause is just, honoring fallen or terribly wounded police officers, and the fundraising objective probably sound, but does the oft-repeated tactic of artists decorating objects do justice to the seriousness of the subject? (See also: *Cows on Parade*.)

### Art in Public Places murals

*Location: Along the W. 16th Street embankment*

An initiative started by Alderman Danny Solis, these works pay homage to Chicago's long history of community murals, enrich a neighborhood dominated by busy train tracks, and bring in street artists with international profiles like ROA and Gaia alongside Chicago artists like Nice One, Justus Roe, and Ruben Aguirre. Be sure to leave the loop to see these.

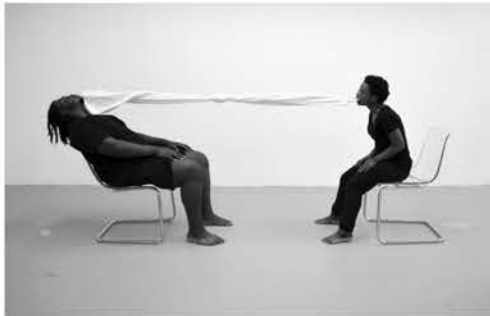


### Lorado Taft, Time

*Location: Cottage Grove Avenue and 59th Street*

Neo-classical drama drives Taft's 1922 allegory of human life and struggle as a massive sea of humanity rises and falls. Groups of figures within the whole enact vignettes; having families; falling in love; going to war; hobbling along as elders.

**ORDINARY PROJECTS PRESENTS  
BY THE HORNS**

 At Vernissage, Expo Chicago  
By Sid Branca


As a part of EXPO's opening night event, Vernissage, Ordinary Projects presented a selection of performative works entitled *By the Horns*. Ordinary Projects is a new initiative from Industry of the Ordinary [Adam Brooks and Mathew Wilson], led by Program Director Meredith Weber. Sid Branca had an opportunity to chat with Meredith about the importance of performance art in a fair context, her involvement with Industry of the Ordinary, and the development of Ordinary Projects.

**MW:** Ordinary Projects is an initiative that's based upon on the success of the platform project Industry of the Ordinary started within their 2012 exhibition at the Cultural Center, a large mid-career survey called *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*. In addition to showing their entire body of work, they also created a platform where other artists were invited to show. At the time I was working on a curatorial project called Happy Collaborationists, which was an apartment gallery in Noble Square focused on performance, installation, and new media. I did that for four years with a collaborator [Anna Trier], and they invited us to show on the platform.

We curated a performance art series on the platform, and the artists got to use all sorts of spaces, which was part of this amazing opportunity that Industry of the Ordinary was given, and offered to other artists in turn. I think a lot of people don't know about the generosity of their practice. They may seem unapproachable, but this generosity of their practice is why I've been involved with them, and why I continue to stay involved. Basically all of the money that was invested in their show by the city was doled back out to other artists.

**SB:** So how did Ordinary Projects begin?

**MW:** When Mana [Contemporary] opened, Matt and Adam were like 'ok, here's this really amazing opportunity to have access to a studio, but we don't really use a studio,' because they meet here [the Skylark in Pilsen]. They were like, 'this is a community that we want to be a

part of, but why would we invest in a space like that to store things?' So they decided to do the Platform project in their studio.

What we've been doing for Ordinary Projects is alternating between their work and the work of other artists that are emerging, and I'm managing those exhibitions. Right now it's a pretty large project, and they consider all of it to be a social sculpture. It's three prongs: the exhibitions; the student summer school; and then what we're calling community projects, which we haven't launched yet.

**SB:** And how did *By the Horns* come to be?

**MW:** The past two years at EXPO, Industry of the Ordinary has performed at Vernissage. This year we all thought 'this is a great opportunity to show Ordinary Projects.' We're only performing on the opening night but what I'm really hoping is to prove something, to prove that this should be an ingrained part of the exhibition. When you go to other fairs, performance art is there. I really want performance to become an integral part of EXPO.

Everything I've ever done in Chicago has been based upon trust. All the relationships I've built, all the opportunities I've gotten have been based upon that. And Tony [Karman] trusts Matt and Adam to present something, and they, in turn, trust me to present something.

[With *By the Horns*] what I really wanted to do was get exposure for artists who were working in some current trends [in performance art] in a really exciting way: social engagement, durational sculpture, dance, spoken word, and then I would say probably a little bit of theater.

Joshua Kent is an artist that graduated from the SAIC Performance Department. I saw him perform a piece called *The Flowers In The Field Are Free*, in which he lays out all of these flowers and gives a speech about generosity, and gives away the flowers to everyone. And it was that he was sincere, although there was theatricality, he was giving of himself. There was just something for me with what he's interested in expressing to people, these really generous acts of beauty. He'll be doing a piece where he's distributing flowers that he is adorned with. It's more spectacle than the other works than I'm showing, but I'm really excited about it.

Alberto [Aguilar] is going to work collaboratively with another artist named Alex Cohen. This is I guess my "social engagement" piece, although he thought it wasn't going to be and I knew it was! He's doing a project called Art Therapy, where he and Alex will serve as the artists, and they're asking the public to provide them with therapy. They have both just met with really brilliant success, and the truth is, it's a funny thing when you talk about where we fit in on this trajectory of being makers, and what do you do next? So they're gonna sit down and have people give them advice, which I think is really brilliant.

James [Green] is an artist who had been a student of Matt Wilson's, [and] he's done mostly new media work in Chicago, but he did a performance with his partner C'ne [Rohlsen] at the Chicago Home Theater Festival. It's called *How Did You Sleep?* and it was originally structured as a performance where they're playing tug of war between the two of them and there's an audio component that's their dreams, and we decided to leave the audio element out for this performance, mostly because I felt there was such a strong sculptural element to the work. It's a durational sculpture, it's a twenty-minute piece and they performed it just for me. [See image.]

**SB:** So would you say a commitment to endowing emerging artists with that kind of trust is an important part of how you work?

**MW:** I'm still operating very much the same way that I did when I was running an apartment gallery. I'm not operating on a budget. So my commerce is my relationships. What I tell artists when I work with them is 'this is what I can offer you, and what will this mean for your career?' Because what I'm really hoping is that any opportunity that I give to someone is a launching pad for the next opportunity. You can't ignore the fact that this is not only an opportunity to exhibit your work to the public, this is an opportunity to exhibit your work to all of the exhibitors.

Years ago as Happy Collaborationists we did a performance series at Midway Fair. The first year we did a booth, and the second year we said 'no way, we can't do that again.' So we curated out of the bathroom, and the idea was that every three hours the work in the bathroom changed, because every three hours somebody was going to need use the bathroom that was working. And so it wasn't really about showing the work to the people that were at the fair for one day, it was about reaching people that were there all weekend. How do we get those people to talk about what's happening? It was a really, really fun project.

So that was something I was thinking about as fair as EXPO was concerned. I have a history as an athlete, and so when I think about art I kind of think about sports. I talk about strategy quite a bit. So thinking of the room—there used to be this play in high school that we would run that was called the gauntlet, where you would set someone up for the three-point shot. And I was thinking, how do we get people to run through the room so that everyone is supporting each other?

Certainly there are sometimes pieces that stick out to me that I really want to work with, but I select the artist, versus the artwork. And then I like to build with that person how they see the work fitting, and how I can support the work so that it's realized to its fullest capabilities.

**BY ART IS CREATED THAT  
GREAT LEVIATHAN: GLENN KAINO**

 AT KAVI GUPTA  
By Gan Uyeda

With the opening words "By art is created that great Leviathan," Thomas Hobbes launches readers into his seminal work of political philosophy, *Leviathan*, in which he imagines the State as a great aggregation of the masses into a singular societal body. Drawing his title from Hobbes' treatise, LA-based artist Glenn Kaino's exhibition at Kavi Gupta Gallery's Elizabeth Street location indicates an ambition for superstrata-level political commentary. Despite the impossible loftiness of this reference, the exhibition nevertheless achieves a complex, wry, and upward looking political statement in its various contemplations of global instability, alternative models of societal organization, and the political possibilities embedded in representation.

The exhibition is built on the conviction that the act of representation is a deeply political one, and thus one freighted with serious political weight and responsibility. From this foundational position, the exhibition opens onto larger themes of global unrest and new modes of mass vocalization. A collection of nondescript chunks of street rubble is key to a number of the sculptures. Gathered from zones of violent social upheaval around the world—fragments from the streets of the Syrian civil war, anti-Erdogan protests in Istanbul, and eruptions of popular anger in Athens, among others—these hand-sized bits of revolutionary weaponry are used in a striking variety of ways. One with particular incisiveness is the piece *Don't Bring A Gameboy To A Gunfight*, where the artist and a network of online collaborators have 3D scanned and printed the street rubble in fluorescent PLA polymer. Riffing on both the threat posed by 3D printed firearms and the political apathy of Richard Long-style poetics, the work's combination of joyfulness, critique, optimism, and uncertainty characterizes the complexity of many of the pieces that make up the exhibition.

One of Kaino's go-to tactics in *Leviathan* is precariousness, using careful balancing to create self-supporting and seemingly unstable structures. These works operate by inviting the viewer to imaginatively project the outcomes of physically interacting with the work. For instance, in *Escala-*, a system of ten scales hangs suspended from a high ledge, balancing trays of shimmering, brightly hued candies. In this closed structure, a single disturbance would upset the carefully counterbalanced composition. Of course, the look-don't-touch


 Glenn Kaino, *Leviathan*, at Kavi Gupta Gallery

strictures of the gallery setting prevent any sort of physical interaction with the scales, a potential stumbling block for a work that seeks to explore ways of transcending systems of zero-sum reward. Yet, by encouraging viewers to inhabit a common inter-subjective space, the work allegorizes the process by which political

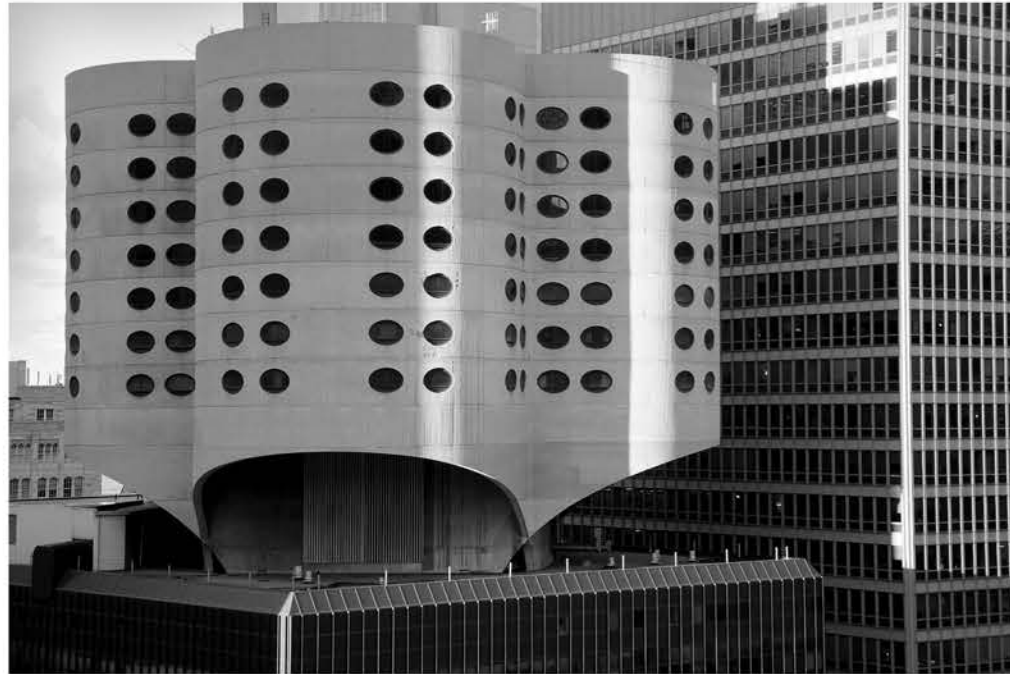
possibilities are negotiated.

Many of the questions Kaino poses will be familiar to anyone who has contemplated the ability of art to enact political change. Indeed, they are fundamental questions that have been addressed in the recent past with manifestos for participatory art or socially embedded practices. These modes of working—the so-called social turn in art—argue that distanced contemplation of art is inferior to active participation, which is supposed to induce higher consciousness by virtue of its physical involvement of the viewer. Rather than participation for its own sake, however, Kaino's work produces its own spaces of empathetic identification, where precarity and violence can be addressed by inhabiting new subjective positions.

In this way, the first work in the show acts as a summation of the experience. Titled *Excalibur*, the work is a slingshot aimed at the entryway to the gallery. The leather pocket of the weapon is embedded in the wall, while the wooden stick projects into the space and the rubber strap hangs loose, ready to be filled with potential energy. To pull *Excalibur* from the wall would be, as in the mythic tale of the sword in the stone, to assume the power of political sovereignty, but at the same time would carry the risk of being in the line of fire. The stick, rubber strap, and sling furthermore turn out to be made entirely of carefully cast and painted bronze—a symbolic act of transforming blank material into representational, iconic language. With force and precision, the weapon conveys the weight and responsibility of making art. A dense, interconnected mesh of recurring themes and provocations, Kaino's sculptures in *Leviathan* only appear unstable. With their depth and diversity of meaning, their balance of playful humor and biting critique, and

their ability to freshly pose fundamental questions about the utility of representation, these works are as solid and expansive as a creature of the deep.

Glenn Kaino, *Leviathan*, At Kavi Gupta Gallery runs through December 20, 2014



Tower of Prentice Women's Hospital designed by Bertrand Goldberg; photo courtesy of Flickr user trevor.pratt

## PRENTICE WINDOWS // JEFF PROKASH

By Joshua Michael Demaree

*When we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for; and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say, as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, "See! This our father did for us."*

—John Ruskin,  
*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*

Richard Nickel, Chicago's legendary architectural preservationist, once famously said, "Great architecture has only two natural enemies: water and stupid men. Nickel had spent much of his life documenting and preserving the buildings of Louis Sullivan. Tragically, while he was attempting to save pieces of Sullivan's signature ornamentation from the partially demolished Chicago Stock Exchange, he was crushed to death when a staircase collapsed in 1972. Nickel was first and foremost a photographer who worked tirelessly to visually document many buildings that were demolished during the mid-century's post-war architecture revamp, but he knew that architecture's true power lies in its materiality. This is why he would risk his life, just to insure that even if the building was demolished, a part of it might live on.

While Chicago has lost many magnificent buildings over the years (what city hasn't?), Bertrand Goldberg's Prentice Women's Hospital is the city's freshest wound. Prentice's tower was posed on four intersecting Roman arches that supported a cantilevered quatrefoil that, like a concrete flower among a sea of glass and steel, remained something of stranger in a strange land in the Brutalist building's Streeterville location. In 2011, the building, which was owned by Northwestern University, was vacated in preparation for a 2012 demolition. Over the next two years Chicago activists, critics, and artists led a long-shot fight to save the building.

After a failed attempt at landmark status and a letter in favor of demolition from Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Northwestern University announced in March of 2013 that the permit to destroy the building had been approved. Since that time — now just over a year ago — the many people who fought to save the building and the city-at-large have stood witness to seeing it dismantled piece by piece, floor-by-floor. Just like the lost architecture of Louis Sullivan that Nickel gave his life to protect, soon nothing intact will exist of Goldberg's infamous tower. Nothing, that is, except for three of its iconic elliptical windows, which were saved by Chicago-based artist Jeff Prokash.

Prokash — who is currently working towards an MFA in sculpture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago — first became interested in Goldberg while working at Furniture Revival, a restoration studio in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood. In preparation for the Chicago

Art Club's retrospective of the architect, *Bertrand Goldberg: Reflections in 2011-12*, Prokash helped restore some of Goldberg's personal furniture. "They were artifacts that weren't part of his practice but definitely influenced his designs," he recalled, noting that he helped clean a sculpture made by Goldberg's mother. The exhibition, which was curated from Goldberg's archives that are housed within the museum, was one of several attempts the city made to sway public opinion of the architect's importance to the city's history and, in hope, to save Prentice.

For the next two years Prokash followed the ongoing battle between Northwestern and the city's cultural elite. But when Northwestern's demolition permit was approved most of the attention to save the building turned toward eulogizing it, taking the building and the battle for its preservation as already lost. Prokash, something of a modern day Richard Nickel, returned to Streeterville to document the demolition. Perhaps it was his chance to handle work that inspired Goldberg — few in the arts can deny the desire to *touch* artwork — and to understand its materiality not by vision but by hand. This distinction is perhaps what made Prokash able to see the entirety of Prentice in the individual pieces as they were taken away as rubble. Luckily for us, he had the idea to save what he could.

He first contacted representatives at Northwestern University to inquire about the fate of the windows. They were, however, no longer Northwestern's to give away. It's common practice when the landowner's contract companies to destroy their buildings they are actually selling the physical materials of the building to that company. The company then sells off the debris as they see fit. This meant that Prentice — the physical building — now belonged to the Brandenburg Industrial Service Company. Prokash spent several feverish weeks attempting to set up the possibility of obtaining even one of the building's iconic windows. He was told it would take an act of God to get one and admitted defeat. But, for reasons unknown, the company later contacted Prokash that there remained four intact windows.

This was the moment that some kind of life after the wrecking ball was possible for Prentice. The quote above is from John Ruskin's *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, in which the nineteenth century critic of art and architecture lays out the most importance principles of architecture. It exemplifies the long held Western beliefs that while people, cultures, and societies are held slave to the time, buildings are something different. They are meant to stand! Few architects would consider the possible deaths that might befall the building they are designing. Death, however, is an inevitable part of most buildings' lives. Nickel knew this and Prokash

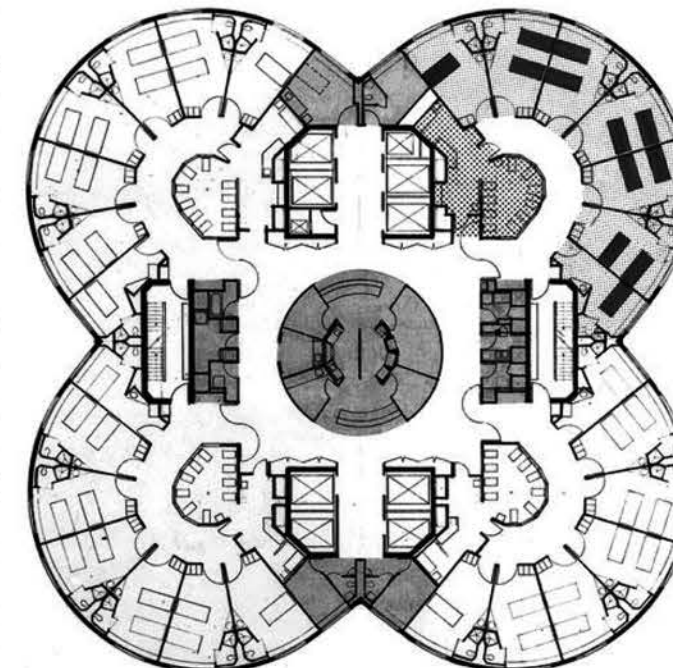
knows it, but *Prentice Windows* present the unique opportunity for Goldberg's tower to find a second life.

It is not surprising upon seeing Prokash's other work to draw a connection to his interest in both Prentice's preservation and its demolition. This is not to say Prokash wanted Prentice demolished, but rather that he was able to see the inevitable as an opportunity. Prokash is a student of the built environment; his work investigates how cultural tastes and values are instilled into and dictated by our constructed environment. One of his pieces, a wall of concrete blocks weaved together through untreated lumber, lays slumped against the gallery wall. This kind of material study — which cleverly allows a construction (a wall) to do the opposite of its purpose (fall down) — is indicative of Prokash's deep understand of our eternal reliance both physically and emotionally on the raw materials all around us. It asks us the Heideggerian question: what do we do when the tool breaks?

"My interest in the built environment really came around from a short time I was working as a construction worker," Prokash remembers. "It came as an epiphany while I was working on someone's house. I realized I was part of bringing raw materials together to then produce this vessel that some family would live in and would develop their entire lives and ideologies from that space." Just as architects inculcate principles and purposes into every aspect of their designs during the planning and building process, it stands to reason that these intricate systems are then revealed as the buildings are deconstructed; akin to dissection on a grand scale.

Richard Nickel — the famed Chicago preservationist that died in 1972 while saving ornamentation from Louis Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange — knew that buildings reveal more about their design and their construction as they are destroyed than they do standing tall. Nickel meticulously photographed buildings throughout their demolition, as its outer façade was stripped bare revealing nothing more than framework and floor plans, he sought to capture the building's skeleton — the system of beliefs and desires that were instilled into its design — for the last time. Due to its signature cantilevered tower and proximity to its surround buildings, Prentice was dismantled painstakingly piece by piece. (This alone might be how the windows survived unscathed.) During this process, Goldberg's intentions behind Prentice's design were on full display.

One look at the tower's floor plan reveals a classic panopticon. French philosopher Michel Foucault posited a circular prison with a lone guard tower in the center. He theorized that, as long as every prisoner could see the tower but not the person inside, the powerful processes of sight and thus accountability would make the prisoners believe they were always being watched and thus, keep them under imaginary control. Prentice took this process of domination and reversed it: rather than prisoners, there were patients, and rather than imaginary guards, there were real nurses. It turned a line of domination into a line of support, allowing the patients to know that someone was always in sight and able to help.



Floor plan of the tower of Prentice Women's Hospital; courtesy of the Bertrand Goldberg Archive

This kind of utilitarian design was key to the tenets of New Brutalism, a system of design that began in Great Britain in the 1950's, favoring unfinished poured concrete as its key aesthetic. Like all movements, it had several founders at various starting points, but most famously were Alison and Peter Smithson, who laid out their most basic objectives in a short piece from the spring of 1957, writing that Brutalism "tries to face up to a mass-production society, and drag a rough poetry out of the confused and powerful forces which are at work." They also point out Brutalism's most contentious argument that has been present since its very beginnings: "Up to now Brutalism has been discussed stylistically, whereas its essence is ethical.

Largely devoid of any decorative flourishes, floor plans were dutifully designed to support any number of imaginable uses. The buildings, which came to appear as large concrete fortresses, were intended to be an architecture for the strong-willed people of postwar Britain as opposed to light and airiness of the International Style. The Smithsons write, "In the immediate postwar period it seemed important to show that architecture was still possible." Brutalism is inherently what critic Terry Smith would call "an architecture of aftermath;" born from the rubble of two world wars, its *bréton brut* ("raw concrete") was chosen for its cheapness, its proletariat lack of decoration, and its ability to protect whatever was inside. This kind of low-cost, multi-use philosophy appealed to American public universities throughout the '60's and '70's — where many Brutalist buildings now face the wrecking ball.

It was this very aesthetic that betrayed Prentice and other Brutalist buildings like it. Despite its populous goals, the buildings slowly became connotative of overburdening fascist ideals — one viewing of *Escape from the Planet of the Apes* (1971) reveals this cultural turn in opinion. The twentieth century would close with Brutalist buildings around the world — Prentice included — facing the possibility of demolition. Ironically this architecture of aftermath, created from the ruins of war, now seems destined to revert back into rubble. What do you do when the tool breaks? Nothing. Unless you are able to find an alternative use for the materials, a similar need we now face in the fight to save Brutalism. Truth: these buildings will be destroyed unless they can find new lives in a different form.

In a book released in April of this year, *Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View of Architecture*, authors Stephen Cairns and Jane M. Jacobs ask the question, "How is the inevitability of death figured and managed in the rich narrative of life that attaches to architecture?" Exploring numerous facets of this intricate and important question throughout, the authors importantly pointing out that demolition, an unavoidable part of most buildings' lives, "annihilates architectural fantasies of permanence" and that it "pulls down architectural creativity made manifest in built form" by erasing the "material referent of a building's circulating meaning." For Northwestern University's research needs, Prentice was never an easy fit and so it had to be demolished but thanks to Prokash, it did not have to die.

Read the full three-part feature on *THE SEEN*.

## CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL // INTERVIEW

By Joshua Michael Demaree

We live in a consumerist age. This, of course, is not a surprise to anyone, especially architects. *Perspecta 47*, the newest edition of Yale's student-edited architectural journal, takes this question head on by emblazoning its theme in big gold lettering across its front: MONEY. These architects-of-tomorrow have no blinders; they already understand that regardless of whatever endlessly hyphenated names scroll at the top of their studio's letterhead, money is the real boss. They ask: "Does architecture reach its potential when untethered from economic realities, or must it harness them to contribute meaningfully to the built environment?"

With Chicago's all-to-recent loss of Bertrand Goldberg's Prentice Women's Hospital, the perpetually tenuous line between haves and have-nots came crashing down into a complex mire of cultural capital, design history, and architectural preservation. We know that the money-question lingers long after the building is complete (leading all the way to death's door, in fact) and it is a question some of us are still asking.

Enter the Chicago Architectural Biennial (CAB), recently announced by Mayor Rahm Emanuel in the city's post-Prentice wake. With this most recent collectivization of the city's architectural community alongside its larger arts & culture communities, the time surely felt ripe to put this mass into force for the city and its treasure trove of architectural feats.

Currently in the planning stages, the CAB is promising to be innovative in approach and design, and a critical step in Chicago's reclamation as an arts & culture powerhouse both domestically and internationally. It will be a space to explore not only trends in international architectural thinking and design, but to work out the complexities of our own relationship with architecture: How do skyscrapers in the Loop impact the arts and culture of South Chicago?

What power do students have to forge the environment of their own future profession? Which is more important: purpose or cultural history? Will we ever see the Chicago Spire?

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to speak with the co-artistic directors of the CAB, Sarah Herda and Joseph Grima. Herda is a mainstay of the Chicago arts & culture scene as director of the Graham Foundation, while Grima—the former editor of the famed *Domus Magazine*—is now in the middle of several curatorial positions for design and technology biennials in both Europe and the Middle East.

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**Joshua Michael Demaree:** The press release notes that the biennial will be a space to



Mies van der Rohe 860-880 Lake Shore Drive Apartments. Photo by Assaf Evron 2014.

investigate "the social, environmental, aesthetic, technological, and economic issues that shape the world we live in." It is refreshing to see a mission of applicability for a biennial, a form of exhibition seen as largely out-of-touch with the general American public. How do you see the CAB as distinguishing itself from other biennials?

**Joseph Grima:** I think the CAB is an opportunity precisely because there is no tradition of this kind of event anywhere in the US. A biennial is fundamentally different from a museum or gallery precisely because it offers a regularly recurring moment of intense debate around a topic chosen by its artistic directors, which allows it to drill much deeper and cast a wider net than most museum exhibitions. In terms of the international scene, I think Chicago's role as a sand-

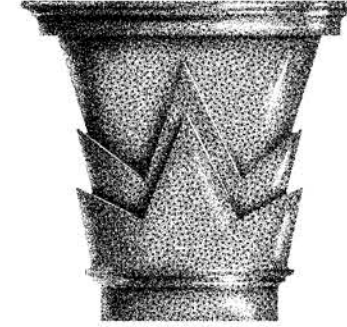
box of modernism gives it the authority to speak incisively not only on the past, but also on the future of architecture—and that is something that is desperately needed right now. Starting from scratch is a rare opportunity to consider what is really needed today.

**JMD:** Joseph, in several of your past curatorial projects you have pushed a critical investigation of how our rapidly-evolving technology changes the most inherent aspects of design and, in turn, affects our everyday lives and spaces. How do you hope to incorporate this same technological investigation into this biennial?

**JG:** It would be disingenuous to speak of architecture and the city today without considering the vastly disruptive effects of technology—both for good and bad—in terms of what has been made technically possible, and the way in which it has changed us culturally. How we socialize and the way we interact and behave in the city are questions for designers, not just for technologists—yet critical investigations into architecture (books, exhibitions, journalism, etc.) tend to either opt for a very disengaged analysis of the technical innovations in the construction industry. At best, it is done at a cursory glance of what these innovations mean for design, or in a politicized, more theoretically driven critique of network culture that is disconnected from everyday life.

The only serious debate surrounding the so-called "smart home" right now, for example, is taking place in technology and civil liberties circles, despite the fact that the technological saturation of connected, networked, information-gathering devices built into the very fabric of every home represents a critical juncture in architecture—as both a challenge and an opportunity. I think questions of this kind are as relevant and interesting to the general public as a professional audience.

Read the rest of this interview on *THE SEEN*, [blog.expo-chicago.com](http://blog.expo-chicago.com)

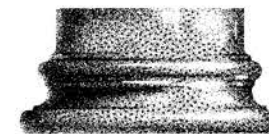


## CLASSIC COLUMN

By Amber Renaye

## BLANK IS ANYTHING

\_\_\_\_\_ is about what anything is about.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ can have anyone's face.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ always wants to somehow get up on top.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is what you make it.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ really cares about people.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ stays where it is put.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ has always had high values attached to it.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is about negotiation.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ will not, under any circumstance, pity you.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ speaks to the absurd.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ can manipulate the way you feel.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is about enlightened situations, enlightened feeling.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ can be as simple as a rock.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is burdened by clutter.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ causes your brain to make certain secretions.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't require a lot of anything.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is something that you feel.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ takes the good with the bad.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is about acceptance at a higher state.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ makes you wonder.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ has to be dusted.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ could have a tail the size of a city.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ helps you understand yourself.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is addictive.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ deals with the impractical.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ takes you to a metaphysical place.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ totally fails sometimes.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is something you want to affect biology.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ does things to people.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is consciousness itself.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ adds up.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ makes casual Fridays look dumb.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ tells it like it is.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ had hell with the baby boomers.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ comes from a profound place of interest.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ might even be a breast implant.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ is very much also about the way you feel.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ creates realities.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ can sharpen a dull mind.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ does it like a lady.



## HED: Business as Usual

By Britt Julious

Outside of the School of the Art Institute's Sullivan Galleries, I ran into Mia DiMeo, one of the publicists for EXPO Chicago. I told her about this column and the changes I noticed in EXPO Chicago last night for the Vernissage. The most noticeable change, of course, was the fact that people seemed at ease. On the second night of the EXPO Chicago experience for Art After Dark, that feeling was again recognizable.

I began my night at the Mickalene Thomas opening of "I was born to do great things" at the Kavi Gupta gallery. The scene was more packed than other galleries I visited that night, most likely a response to the presence of the artist herself. Mickalene has become something of a goddess for young female artists, especially black women. She was there to share her thoughts on the exhibition as well as her relationship to her mother.

I sat with a crowd of folks, young and old and diverse, and watched the film, *Happy Birthday to a Beautiful Woman*, from start to finish. Within a few minutes, I began to cry. I couldn't stop myself and it felt like it came out of nowhere. A woman patted my shoulder. I didn't look over, but I imagine we were in the same emotional place.

The thing I find most fascinating and most important about gallery openings is the confluence of people of different ages. What you will find are hungry young art students eager to immerse themselves in the art world. The older they get, the more likely they will distance themselves from this, a more money-driven scene. But in the meantime, they will drink the cheap wine and they will pass judgment and they will have the time of their lives. On the other end are the

folks who I assume must be collectors but instead seem without good taste. They all look the same: old without being old, boring though they might sporadically find good things to say. They too were there and they made the scene what it always is: a little uncomfortable but tolerable.

Later, I took time to visit Western Exhibitions to view the Lile Caree show which opened earlier this month as well as an opening at Andrew Rafacz for artists Robert Burnier and Samantha Bittman. Both were pleasant, though I didn't find anything notable about the experience. Unlike the Mickalene Thomas show which allowed for some public vulnerability in the face of total strangers, this was an opening like any other opening: people with their backs to the art and instead of viewing it, they are catching up with those around them. I had to go.

I took the train to the opening of "A Lived Practice" at the Sullivan Galleries which was much more lively. But despite its liveliness, that too felt calm, as if everyone was prepared for the setting, prepared for the crowds, prepared for the show, and was much more interested in finding the folks they knew who would provide a good time. Unlike EXPO, this was not a homecoming.

I am not one to attend gallery openings regularly. Instead, I like to visit on the off hours. And so, my time was just OK. But it could have been worse. And for everyone else quietly sipping cold beers and their first glasses of red wine in months, it was business - social and otherwise-as usual.

## LOCAL EATS &amp; DRINKS

## Restaurants

Calumet Fisheries	3259 E 95th St • \$
Claudio, aka The Tamale Guy	@tamaletracker • \$
Lula Cafe	2537 N Kedzie Blvd • \$
Super Dawg	6363 N. Milwaukee Avenue • \$
XOCO	449 N Clark St • \$
Avec	615 W Randolph St • \$\$
Nightwood	2119 S Halsted St • \$\$
Beatrix	2853 519 N Clark St • \$\$\$

## Bars

Green Mill	4802 N Broadway St • \$
The Hideout	1354 W Wabansia Ave • \$
Hungry Brain	2319 W Belmont Ave • \$
Rainbo Club	1150 N Damen Ave • \$
Parson's Chicken & Fish	2952 W Armitage • \$\$
Perman Wine	802 W Washington Blvd • \$\$
Signature Room	875 N Michigan Ave • \$

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